



Data Feed and Data Automation Guide

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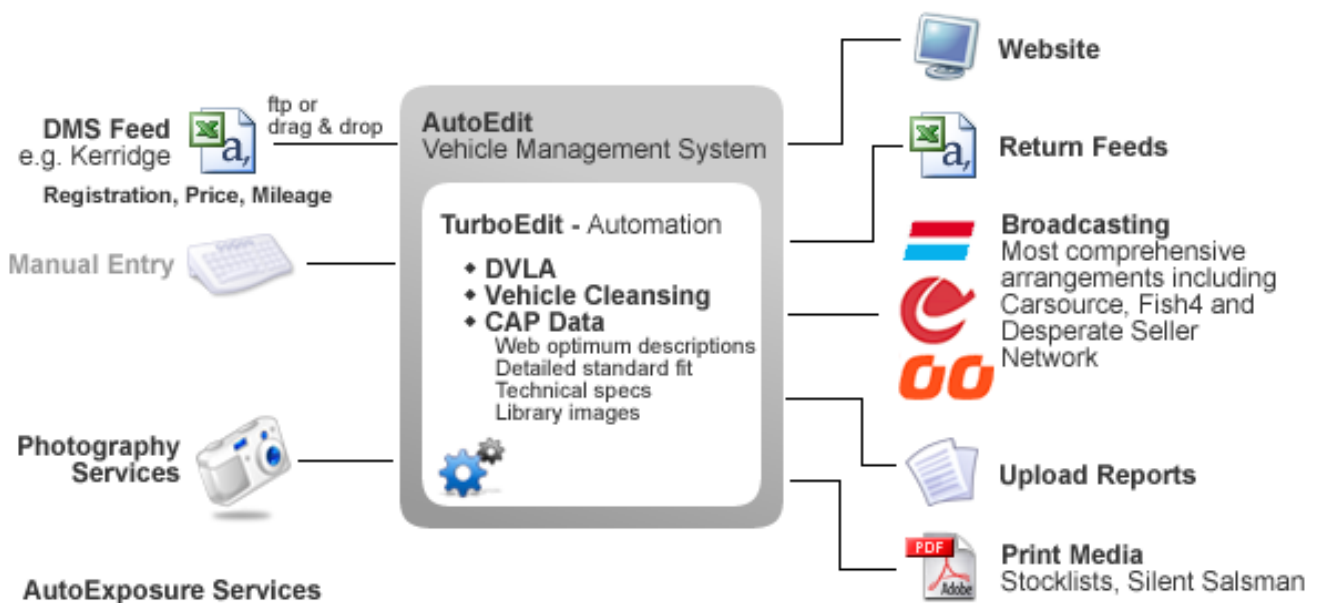
This guide is designed to help dealerships to get data into the AutoExposure system by way of a data feed.

Definition of a Data Feed

A data feed is scenario where vehicle information is fed via a DMS, for example Kerridge, as opposed to entered manually via a web interface. Data feeds are typically used in conjunction with a CAP license and data automation to provide a clean, detailed and complete data from only a Registration, Price and Mileage being provided.

Understanding the Process

The service and process is possibly best understood diagrammatically.



It is important to note that this is the general flow. Data feeders may opt to not subscribe to data licensing and therefore have to send detailed data or complete every vehicle manually.

Benefits of Setting up a Data Feed

Data feeds eliminate the need to maintain multiple sets of data. This does not only save a vast amount of resources, but also ensures data consistency. This can overcome wider reaching implications such as compliance with Trading Standards on the web.

Dealerships who maintain a DMS are strongly advised to setup a data feed.

Benefits of Data Automation

DMS's typically provide a dealership with the tools to run their business but fall short of providing data consistent and complete enough for the web. Data automation eliminates these issues and manual entry time. Data automation also opens opportunity of much more detailed descriptions which would otherwise be impractical to obtain by hand.



Available Data Licenses

License	Notes	Standard
DVLA & CAP Make Model Data	Returns V5 / V6 level information such as make, model, colour, registration date, and number registered keepers	*
CAP Standard Fit	Returns a web optimum description such as central locking, alloy wheels, etc, and a longer more detailed manufacturer specific description such as 16" TWS Alloy Wheels, Blaupunkt RDS Radio Cassette, etc.	
CAP Technical Spec	Returns detail technical, performance and safety specs such as 0 – 60, top speeds, mpg, NCAP ratings, etc.	
CAP Image	Attaches an image from a comprehensive set of library photos	

*DVLA level information is included as part of most standard agreements.

Most data feed users are strongly advised to subscribe to CAP standard fit due to the quality and completeness of data returned by their DMS.

Please visit www.autoedit.co.uk for examples and contact the office for more information regarding licensing on 0870 3600311.

Data Automation Imperfections

It is important to note that data automation is not perfect. DVLA lookup is prone to fail if a registration is too recent, i.e. pre-reg, and CAP descriptions where the vehicle is either a very new or very old model.

Typical stats for used vehicles between 6 month and 4 years old are:

DVLA: 99%

CAP Standard Fit descriptions: 85 - 90%

CAP description quality and completeness can vary between manufacturers.

Responsibilities

The success of the service is reliant on a feeds being processed on a regular basis. As AutoExposure do not have access to your systems, it is vital that someone within the organisation is delegated the overall responsibility of monitoring and maintaining web data. Whilst the data automation is generally good, there are instances where incomplete data is returned. Again, vehicles are something AutoExposure does not have access to, so is a house keeping task your organisation needs to cover.

Checklist:

- Setup the data feed
- Send data on a regular basis
- Monitor and respond to reports
- Monitor and amend partial data



Transfer Mechanisms

Two methods of upload are available:

- 1). FTP (recommended in automated setups)
- 2). Drag & Drop (recommended for manual users)

To use FTP a suitable software client is required, Cute FTP, WS FTP etc. Login details are detailed within the system **Vehicle Management > TurboEdit / Datafeeds > Datafeed Settings**.

The Drag & Drop facility requires Java Run Time 1.4.1+. The Drag & Drop hotspot is located within the **TurboEdit / Datafeeds > Upload Vehicles** part of the system. Benefits of the Drag & Drop feature include:

- Instantaneous import and feedback
- Client side optimisation of images (saving time and bandwidth)
- Convenience for people who access the system regularly
- Alternative method for people who experience problems with FTP due to firewalls or other reasons

If your computer does not have the appropriate run time installed, please visit www.java.com.

The Need for Unique Data

Every record must be unique in both the data feed file and the AutoExposure database. The import system uses Registrations, Stock IDs (Vehicle_ID field), and VINs as unique identifiers. A import will fail if duplication exists in any of these fields. Import failures are detailed in the Upload Log (see below) to help the data feed administrator identify and correct problems.

Tools to Help Manage Data

There are a few tools available to help the data feed administrator and other staff:

- Upload Reports and Logs
- Vehicle Status Folders
- Photography Update Sheet
- Photo Archive Tools

Upload Reports and Logs

The system generates two types of report.

- Upload Logs
- Upload Reports

The upload log is a basic text file which details the number of vehicles added, deleted and modified. The file also details import failures due to invalid file formats or record duplication (See above).

Upload Reports summarise import actions and can help in the management of data. Useful feedback includes DVLA, Full Description, and Technical Spec level data retrieval success and Folder destination (See below).

Both reports are available from within the system **Vehicle Management > TurboEdit / Datafeeds > History Log**.



Vehicle Status Folders

Vehicle status folders enable newly added data to be separated from the bulk of your stock. Specific folders can also be held from being published to the web either for verification purposes or to hold incomplete records from your website.

Folder destinations can be tuned based on the level of data completion, so you can hold incomplete data for manual amendment whilst publishing complete records straight to the web.

It is highly recommended that all data is reviewed before publishing to the web as a Trading Standards precaution.

Vehicle Status Folders are controlled from within the **Vehicle Management > TurboEdit / Datafeeds / General Settings** part of the system. Folders displayed on the web are controlled within **Vehicle Management > Stock Categorisation > Vehicle Status Settings**.

The table below can be used to help in the decision making process. Please contact the office if further assistance is required.

High Intervention				
Option	Description	Data Retrieval / Folder Settings		
		Full	DVLA	No Data
1	You would like to vet all vehicles before publishing to the web either as a Trading Standards precaution or so you can categorise vehicles	Pending	Pending	Pending
2	You would like to manually amend vehicles where the system fails to obtain spec level information (typically 10-15%)	Forecourt	Pending	Pending
3	You would like to manually amend vehicles where the system fails to return DVLA level information (rare).	Forecourt	Forecourt	Pending
4	You do not wish to manually amend any vehicles, around 10-15% are likely to be missing a spec and the occasional vehicle may be missing the most basic of information. This can be more prevalent where very new / pre reg cars are in the data feed.	Forecourt	Forecourt	Forecourt
No Intervention				

If you answered 2 or 3 and would like to display the vehicles on the web in the interim, set the Pending Folder Display to yes, otherwise set to no.

Photography Update Sheet

The AutoEdit system generates a Photography Update Sheet to assist in the collation of photos;

Vehicle Management > Click Print Media Link > Select the Photography Update Sheet Option > and Create

The Photography Update Sheet details all the vehicles which require photos by Description and By Registration.

The description list provides assistance in cases where vehicle identification is easy, or the person is knowledgeable about stock locations.

The registration list enables someone to walk up and down lines of stock and identify vehicles by cross referencing. This is not nearly as time consuming as it sounds, and can help in cases where identification is not easy or a lot of photos need be taken.

Another possible method of photo collation is to place a small sticker on the windscreen when a photo is taken. Vehicles missing a sticker require a photo to be taken.



Photo Archive Tools

Tools are available to help users remove, rename and associate vehicles from the Photo Archive. These tools can be of particular use where association failed due to typing errors. These tools are available within the **Vehicle Management > TurboEdit / Datafeeds > Photo Archive** part of the login. Please see below for more information regarding photos and the archive.

Obtaining and Uploading Photos

There are two ways photos can be obtained for your website

- Self photography
- Weekly photography service

AutoExposure also offer a photography enhancing service where vehicles are removed from their undesirable surroundings and placed on a natural but aesthetically pleasing background.

If your DMS system holds photographs they can be referenced in the data file by URL or to a zip uploaded with your data file. More often than not photos are not contained with DMS systems, so are uploaded separately.

The recommended method of upload is either via FTP or Drag & Drop as it saves time over manual upload and is more flexible.

Images must be labelled either by registration or stock id and followed by a separator and photo number, e.g. A123XYZ_1.jpg. The format must match your data feed settings.

Photos are automatically associated with vehicles on upload. Photos which can not be associated are placed in a photo archive and are then automatically associated with a vehicle as and when it becomes available.

In cases where photos cannot be associated due to inaccurate labelling they can be manually mapped to vehicles through the photo archive tool (See above).

It is important to note that if you subscribe to AutoExposures photography service and photos are not easily identifiable, e.g. missing registration plate, then it is primarily your organisations responsibly to manually associate the photo via the photo archive tools.

Do's, Don'ts, tips and tricks

- **Do** Get data right at source

Data feeders strongly advised to get the data right at source. A well maintained DMS will lead to a trouble free data feed. Duplication of vehicles in your DMS and will lead to the import failing

- **Don't** manipulate files in Excel

Regardless of how careful you try to be, editing a file in Excel will occasionally lead to a problem with the file format and cause the import to fail. Always try and get the data right at source and upload it in its raw format. If you must manipulate your files in Excel, please be extra careful.

- **Don't** add vehicles manually

Vehicles must not be added manually as it often leads to duplications causing the import to fail.

- **Do** vet and manually amend vehicles

Remember that automation is not perfect. Effective management of data will improve your website. Make use of the vehicle status folder settings. It is fine to manually amend vehicles but not to add them.



- **Do** assign someone the responsibility of overseeing a data feed

An administrative contact must be known to AutoExposure and responding to reports and error logs are paramount to a data feeds success. AutoExposure reserve the right to disable a feed at any time if it is felt that it is not getting the attendance required.

- **Do** maintain some level of hierarchical control

If data responsibilities are delegated in multi branch accounts, please maintain some level of hierarchical control with data feed administrator being the point of responsibility.

Contacts

datafeeds@autoexposure.co.uk - Enquiries of a day to day nature

development@autoexposure.co.uk - Development issues

bugs@autoexposure.co.uk – Reports of technical failure with the system, please do not send problems relating report log errors to this address, these enquiries should be sent to datafeeds@autoexposure.co.uk